



Standard Test Method for Boiling Point Distribution of Hydrocarbon Solvents by Gas Chromatography¹

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1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the boiling point distribution of hydrocarbon solvents by capillary gas chromatography. This test method is limited to samples having a minimum initial boiling point of 37°C (99°F), a maximum final boiling point of 285°C (545°F), and a boiling range of 5 to 150°C (9 to 270°F) as measured by this test method.

1.2 For purposes of determining conformance of an observed or calculated value using this test method to relevant specifications, test result(s) shall be rounded off “to the nearest unit” in the last right-hand digit used in expressing the specification limit, in accordance with the rounding-off method of Practice E29.

1.3 The values stated in SI units are standard. The values given in parentheses are for information purposes only.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

D86 Test Method for Distillation of Petroleum Products at Atmospheric Pressure

D850 Test Method for Distillation of Industrial Aromatic Hydrocarbons and Related Materials

D1078 Test Method for Distillation Range of Volatile Organic Liquids

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D01 on Paint and Related Coatings, Materials, and Applications and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D01.35 on Solvents, Plasticizers, and Chemical Intermediates.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard’s Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

D2887 Test Method for Boiling Range Distribution of Petroleum Fractions by Gas Chromatography

D2892 Test Method for Distillation of Crude Petroleum (15-Theoretical Plate Column)

D3710 Test Method for Boiling Range Distribution of Gasoline and Gasoline Fractions by Gas Chromatography

E29 Practice for Using Significant Digits in Test Data to Determine Conformance with Specifications

E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *initial boiling point (IBP), n*—the point at which a cumulative area count equal to 0.5 % of the total area under the chromatogram is obtained.

3.1.2 *final boiling point (FBP), n*—the point at which a cumulative area count equal to 99.5 % of the total area under the chromatogram is obtained.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The sample is introduced into a capillary gas chromatographic column that separates hydrocarbons in the order of increasing boiling point. The column temperature is raised at a reproducible rate and the area under the chromatogram is recorded throughout the run. Boiling points are assigned from a calibration curve obtained under the same conditions by running a known mixture of hydrocarbons covering the boiling range expected in the sample. From these data, the boiling point distribution of the sample is obtained.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The gas chromatographic determination of the boiling point distribution of hydrocarbon solvents can be used as an alternative to conventional distillation methods for control of solvents quality during manufacture, and specification testing.

5.2 Boiling point distribution data can be used to monitor the presence of product contaminants and compositional variation during the manufacture of hydrocarbon solvents.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard.

5.3 Boiling point distribution data obtained by this test method are not equivalent to those obtained by Test Methods **D86**, **D850**, **D1078**, **D2887**, **D2892**, and **D3710**.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Chromatograph*—Any gas chromatograph that can handle capillary column and has the following characteristics:

6.1.1 *Detector*—A flame ionization detector (FID) capable of continuous operation at a temperature equivalent to the maximum column temperature employed.

6.1.2 *Column Temperature Programmer*—The chromatograph must be capable of reproducible linear temperature programming over a range sufficient to establish a retention time of 1 min for *n*-pentane and to allow elution of entire sample within a reasonable time period.

6.1.3 *Sample Inlet System*—The sample inlet system must be capable of operating continuously at a temperature up to the maximum column temperature employed, or provide on-column injection.

NOTE 1—The use of cool, on-column injection using an automatic injector or sampler has been shown to provide better precision relative to manual injection.

6.1.4 *Column*—A 10 to 30 m by 0.53 mm inside diameter by 3- μ m bonded methyl silicone, fused silica, or equivalent column that elutes components in order of boiling points, and meets the resolution criteria specified in 8.2 must be used (see 8.4).

6.1.5 *Integrator*—Means must be provided for determining the accumulated area under the chromatogram. This can be done by means of a computer or electronic integrator. A timing device can be used to record the area at set time intervals. The same basis for measuring time must be used to determine the retention times in the calibration, and the sample. The maximum signal measured must be within the linear range of the measuring system used.

6.1.6 *Flow Controller*—The chromatograph must be equipped with a constant-flow device capable of maintaining the carrier gas at a constant flow rate throughout the temperature program.

6.1.7 *Sample Introduction*—A microsyringe is required for the introduction of the sample to the gas chromatograph (see Note 1).

7. Reagents and Materials

7.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals shall be used in the preparation of the calibration mixture.

7.2 *Calibration Mixture*—A synthetic blend of pure liquid hydrocarbons of known boiling points. The components of the calibration mixture are listed in Table 1 and prepared by mixing equivolume quantities of the components. At least one component in the mixture must have a boiling point equal to or lower than the initial boiling point of the sample, and one component must have a retention time greater than any component in the sample.

7.3 *Carrier Gas, helium (high purity)*—Additional purification is recommended by the use of molecular sieves or other suitable agents to remove water, oxygen, and hydrocarbons.

TABLE 1 Calibration Mixture

Peak Number	Compound Identification	Normal Boiling Point, °C
1	<i>n</i> -Pentane	36.1
2	2-Methyl Pentane	60.0
3	<i>n</i> -Hexane	68.9
4	2,4-Dimethyl Pentane	80.6
5	<i>n</i> -Heptane	98.3
6	Toluene	110.6
7	<i>n</i> -Octane	125.6
8	<i>p</i> -Xylene	138.3
9	<i>n</i> -Propyl Benzene	159.4
10	<i>n</i> -Decane	173.9
11	<i>n</i> -Butyl Benzene	183.3
12	<i>n</i> -Dodecane	216.1
13	<i>n</i> -Tridecane	235.6
14	<i>n</i> -Tetradecane	253.9
15	<i>n</i> -Pentadecane	270.6
16	<i>n</i> -Hexadecane	287.2

7.3.1 **Warning:** Helium is a compressed gas under high pressure.

7.4 *Detector Gases, air, hydrogen (high purity)*—Additional purification for air and hydrogen is recommended by the use of molecular sieves, activated carbons, or other suitable agents to remove water and organics.

7.4.1 **Warning:** Air and hydrogen are compressed gases under high pressure. Hydrogen is an extremely flammable gas.

8. Preparation of Apparatus

8.1 *Column Preparation*—The column must be conditioned at the maximum operating temperature to reduce baseline shifts due to bleeding of column substrate.

NOTE 2—The column can be conditioned using the following procedure:

- Disconnect the column from the detector,
- Purge the column at ambient temperature with carrier gas for at least 30 min,
- With carrier gas flowing through the column, raise the column temperature to the maximum operating temperature and maintain the temperature at this level for 12 to 16 h,
- Cool the column to ambient temperature,
- Reconnect the column to the detector,
- Set the detector temperature to at least 5°C higher than the maximum column temperature, and
- Program the column temperature up to the maximum several times with normal carrier flow until a stable, flat baseline is obtained.

8.2 *Column Resolution*—To test column resolution, inject the same volume of the calibration mixture as used during normal sample analysis and obtain the chromatogram by the procedure described in Section 9. Using the *n*-dodecane (C_{12}) and *n*-tridecane (C_{13}) peaks, and Fig. 1, calculate the resolution, *R*, as calculated from the equation:

$$R = 2D/(Y_1 + Y_2) \quad (1)$$

where:

D = time, s, between *n*- C_{12} and *n*- C_{13} apexes

Y_1 = peak width of *n*- C_{12} , s

Y_2 = peak width of *n*- C_{13} , s

The resolution, *R*, thus calculated must be between eight and twelve to be acceptable.